



News Release

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North Dakota Residents Receive High Honor from USDA

Fargo, N.D., January 9, 2012 – Violet Aasland and James Vetter, representatives of the North Dakota Field Office of the U.S. Department of Agriculture's (USDA) National Agricultural Statistics Service (NASS), were recognized as Enumerators of the Year at NASS's annual awards ceremony. Enumerators are National Association of State Departments of Agriculture (NASDA) employees who collect agricultural and farm-related data directly from producers via phone and personal interviews on behalf of NASS.

NASS's Awards for Excellence program recognizes individuals and teams who have contributed the most to the agency's success throughout the year. Only 12 of the 3,500 enumerators nationwide received the award this year. The award ceremony was held at USDA's Whitten Building in Washington, D.C., in December.

"Both Violet and James are assets in fulfilling the NASS mission of continuing to provide timely and accurate statistics in service to U.S. and North Dakota agriculture," said Darin Jantzi, director of NASS's North Dakota Field Office. "They are receiving these awards because of their extraordinary people skills, their exceptional mentoring of new enumerators, and the increases they generated in survey response rates."

Aasland began her NASDA career in June 1980 and has proven to be a valuable asset to the North Dakota Field Office. Based on her vast knowledge of agriculture and NASS surveys, she is excellent at interviewing agricultural producers and exceeded the state average response rate for the June Agricultural Survey by nine percent. She proactively assisted less experienced enumerators by working with them on the phone and computer and sharing her data collection techniques.

Vetter also did an outstanding job interviewing producers across the state as part of NASS's survey process. He achieved a 100 percent response rate on the 2010 Potato Objective Yield Survey and a 94 percent response rate on another survey. Besides being an excellent enumerator, Vetter has shown great leadership skills and has provided technical guidance to his fellow field enumerators for all surveys conducted by NASS in North Dakota.

As one of the nation's top statistical agencies, NASS conducts hundreds of surveys every year across the nation and prepares reports covering virtually every aspect of U.S. agriculture.

NASS provides accurate, timely, useful and objective statistics in service to U.S. agriculture. The agency invites you to express your thoughts and provide occasional feedback on our products and services by joining a data user community. To join, sign in at <http://usda.mannlib.cornell.edu/subscriptions> and look for "NASS Data User Community."